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CHAPTER VII

SLAV AGAINST TEUTON

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ONE OF THE MOST appalling deeds of the Communist Parties of Eastern Europe—especially in Czechoslovakia and Poland—was the brutal expulsion of millions of people, both men and women, young and old, from their homes, for no reason but that they were Germans and not Slavs. As V. Gollancz says, the expulsion of the Germans is 'among the greatest crimes since Genghis Khan.'

The Kremlin hoped to derive many advantages from this expulsion. The Slavs of Eastern Europe would naturally look for leadership to the greatest Slav nation, Russia. Moreover, the threat of the return of the millions of Germans who had been expelled would create a barrier of suspicion and hatred between Eastern Europe and the Western Powers who control Western Germany where the majority of those expelled found refuge. As a result of the expropriation of the Germans, most of the industry of Czechoslovakia and Poland—the two most industrialised countries of Eastern Europe—could be transferred to the state (i.e., to the control of the Communist Party) while 'national unity' and 'order' were maintained. The inhuman explusion of the Germans would inevitably demoralise the Slavs, both morally and intellectually, as it would accustom them to the most brutal crimes and would involve them as accomplices in these crimes. (Of course, with its usual unscrupulousness, the Kremlin now appeals to German nationalism. Instead of Slavs against Teutons, the Russians and Germans, the two greatest peoples, as Stalin said in his message of October 13th, 1949, must stand together against the imperialist West.)

Let us begin with a description of the persecution and expulsion of the Germans in Eastern Europe after the war.

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Number of Germans Expelled

167 563 661 R. H. M. Worsley, in an article called 'Mass Expulsion', in *Nineteenth Century* (December, 1945) gives the following summary of the expulsion of Germans:

Country of Permanent Residence	*Number Involved*	*Statistical Source*
East Prussia	2,333,301	*Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer das Deutches Reich*, census for 1933.
Pomerania	1,920,897	
West Prussia	337,578	
Lower Silesia	3,204,004	
Upper Silesia	1,482,765	
Total	9,278,545	
German minorites in the Baltic States	200,000	Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian data.
War-time German immigration to:—		
Poland	800,000	I.L.O., *Displacement of Population in Europe* p. 38
Occupied Eastern Territories	300,000	
German minority in Poland	1,059,000	Polish census, 1921.
War-time immigration to Czechoslovakia	480,000	I.L.O., *Displacement of Population in Europe*, p. 38
Sudeten	3,231,688	Czechoslovakian census, 1930.
German minorities in:—		
Hungary	520,000	Hungarian census, 1920.
Rumania	740,000	Royal Inst. of International Affairs, *South-Eastern Europe*. p. 8.
Yugoslavia	513,472	
Grand Total	17,062,716	

This table somewhat exaggerates the extent of the expulsions, for it is based on pre-war statistics, and during the war a considerable proportion of the populations of these areas was killed, and before the end of the war many had fled from the areas. In addition a number of Germans remain in Eastern Europe: 500 thousand in Rumania, 250–300 thousand in Hungary, 200 thousand in Czechoslovakia—altogether about a million. E. M. Kulischer, in his book *Europe on the Move* (New York, 1949) says that the total number of Germans expelled after the war was 11,200,000 (p. 302). (This does not include the 4 million Germans who fled in 1945–6 from the Soviet zone of Germany to the Western zone, nor those who fled after this date). Whichever figure is taken of the number of Germans who were expelled or who fled from the East, it exceeded even the number expelled and recruited for labour by Hitler during the war. On this point Kulischer writes: 'The

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total number of foreign workers in Germany, including prisoners of war and foreign civilian workers officially recognized as foreigners, but excluding workers from Alsace-Lorraine and Sudetenland, exceeded six million in 1943. In 1944 the high mark of eight million was reached (of whom nearly 2 million were p.o.w.'s—Y.G.)' (p. 264). He adds: 'Altogether, it can be estimated that the displacement of 30 million or more people during Hitler's rule over Europe has resulted in the permanent shifting of 2–3 million. The final redistribution of Europe's population was due to Germany's defeat, which opened the way for a new and in this case permanent migration of another twenty-five million*, probably the greatest in European history' (p. 305).

Considerations of space make it necessary to choose between alternative methods of describing the character of the expulsions, either by relating more or less in detail the fate of the Germans in one of the East European countries, or briefly surveying the fate of the Germans in them all. The former method is preferable, and the treatment of the Germans in Czechoslovakia will be taken as the example.

The Sudeten Germans

The Sudeten Germans were not new inhabitants of Sudetenland. They came there about 700 years ago, when Spain was still in the hands of the Arabs, and some centuries before America was discovered. They were as numerous as the populations of some of Europe's small states. The 1930 census put their number at 3.2 million, as compared with Norway's 2.8 million, Finland's 3.6 million, Denmark's 3.7 million and Switzerland's 4.1 million.

The social structure of the Sudeten German community was not very different from that of the Czechs or Slovaks except that the percentage of workers was higher (a little higher than among the Czechs, and much higher than among the Slovaks). According to the 1930 census, the national communities comprised different social groups in the following proportions:—

*In this is included some millions of non-Germans: Poles who had migrated from the area annexed by Russia (about 4 million) to the Western territories taken from Germany, Czechs and Slovaks who migrated to Sudetenland, displaced persons who returned to their countries, Jewish refugees who migrated to Palestine and other countries, etc.

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5. Land Reform and Agricultural Improvement

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I

Eastern Europe was overwhelmingly peasant between the two world wars. The peasantry, for whom land was not merely a means of production or of income, but the established basis of family life, formed the majority of the population. The main problem of this region was rural overpopulation. In the period before the First World War, the surplus young people emigrated in considerable numbers to the United States and to other overseas countries. After 1918 this outlet was closed, and everybody had to remain on his home soil. There was too little land for too many people: roughly twice as many people were living off the land as was the case in Western Europe.

Everybody wanted land and therefore the price was enormously high. After money was spent to buy the land, there was not enough left to buy the numbers of cattle that the holding could support or to improve farming techniques. Lack of capital was responsible for the fact that farming methods remained the same as they had been for fifty or more years. The yields were very low, and there was no possibility of increasing them. In fact, yields decreased be-

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stable, fair prices for agricultural products and to secure them a market. The Czechoslovakian Grain State Monopoly, established in 1934, was the only institution to bring any real benefit to the farming population. In other Eastern European countries, the situation reduced even further both the internal market and the income per head of the rural population. Less money than ever was available for improvements or for educating the peasants in new methods and techniques.

The alleviation of this situation came from Nazi Germany. Since 1935 Germany had been buying the greatest proportion of this region's agricultural surpluses and, in return, had been sending its own industrial goods into that area. Eastern Europe, and the Balkan states especially, became so dependent upon Germany's buying that the term "economic conquest" became a reality. This conquest, which was later political and military, of course did not bring any remedy to the agricultural problem of this region.

III

The Second World War devastated whole countries. Nowhere did the four horsemen of the Apocalypse reap a greater harvest than in Poland and Yugoslavia. In their wake came a troubled period which brought with it all the miseries and hardships that have always attended political and social revolutions. Vast numbers of the population were killed during the war. In Poland alone these numbered six million. The unbalance which this caused was greatly aggravated by enormous shifts of population in many of the Eastern European countries. The Germans were expelled from Poland and Czechoslovakia in millions, and from Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Rumania in hundreds of thousands. The total number of Germans expelled from this region was estimated at over eleven million. Changes in state

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frontiers were another cause for great migrations. Four million Poles moved from the territory which was incorporated into the U.S.S.R., and millions of Poles, Czechs, and Slovaks moved into districts formerly inhabited by the Germans. Although these changes alleviated the problem of rural overpopulation in Eastern Europe, there was still, at the end of the Second World War, a surplus population estimated at nine million.

The Communist parties in various Eastern European states knew very well how to exploit this situation. They knew that it was vital to the success of revolution that the peasantry should not be opposed to it. They knew that the Russian Revolution had been achieved only because Lenin was fully aware of the desire of the peasant for more land.

Orthodox Marxist theory required that the land be nationalized and that it be administered by the state. Land was considered the most important means of production, and it had to be treated as such. This dogma was abandoned by Lenin for tactical reasons. He nationalized land in the Soviet Union during the revolution of 1917, but distributed it under ninety-nine-year leases to small and medium peasants for private exploitation. It was the political pressure of the peasants which forced Lenin to change his political doctrine and implement the agrarian program of the Populists, his political opponents. Lenin and his followers did not approve of the peasant who, according to them, was a relic of the precapitalistic society. It was Lenin's view that "small, individual farming gives birth to capitalism and the bourgeoisie daily, hourly, spontaneously and on a mass scale," and that in the future classless society the peasant was to assume the status of a worker on the land as his fellow in town was a worker in industry.

Political expediency determined Lenin's change in tactics. He supported small agrarian property holders only because

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per cent; and Czechoslovakia, 41 per cent. Thus it can be easily seen that, with the exception of Czechoslovakia whose industry was the most developed in the region, the countries of Eastern Europe were predominantly agricultural and peasant in nature. Yet despite the predominantly peasant character of these countries, the peasants as such had relatively little political influence.

Although there was an increase in the output of agricultural goods in all these countries between 1918 and 1945, the competition offered by overseas cereals strongly affected the agriculture of Eastern Europe. Cereals, one of the major products of the region, had to be undersold to Germany. Added to this unfortunate situation, the world depression of 1929 came as a terrible blow to the economy of Eastern Europe, the most disastrous years lasting from 1931 until 1934. Industry, with its frequent cartels, was better able to defend itself than was agriculture, and thus the "price scissors," or the disparity between agricultural and industrial prices, cut mostly into the income of the agricultural population. This resulted in a general lowering of both the purchasing power and the standard of living. Loans at high rates of interest were frequent and taxation increased the poverty of the peasants. These, as the major element of the population, pressed heavily for reforms and spread malcontent in their respective countries.

Soon after the First World War, some states realized that the solution to this situation was industrialization. Emigration, as a possible solution, was not favored in any of the Eastern European states as it would have decreased manpower. Since war was considered more or less imminent after 1933, military and industrial groups were especially opposed to any large-scale loss of population, although emigration was never prohibited by actual government order.

Bohemia, which had been in a highly advantageous position in the industrialization program of Austria before the